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ANALYSIS BRANCH

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO: BRUSSELS FOR USEC

EXDIS

FROM : Amembassy SAIGON

DATE: July 31, 1967

SUBJECT : Optimism of Secretary of Labor

Action Office Symbol

Name of Officer

REF :

Nguyen Huu Hung, Secretary of Labor in the Ky government for more than a year now, expects to hold on to his post for a good many more months. He expressed this optimism in what he called a "frank" conversation.

Hung's view is noteworthy for two reasons, one personal, the other political:

1. Two months or so ago Hung privately said he wanted to quit as secretary of labor at his first opportunity. What changed his mind? He said he now realized that it was important to the nation to have a labor secretary who could maintain labor peace, as he has done.

2. The Thieu-Ky ticket is a sure-fire winner, in Hung's opinion. Like most Ky supporters, Hung at first was shocked by Ky's move down to No. 2 on the ticket, but now he will campaign for the joint ticket. He has accompanied Ky around the country on more than a dozen pre-election trips; beginning in early August, he will do the same with Thieu. Thieu and Ky, said Hung, have patched up their differences, and are working together as a team.

Comment. Hung was named to his post with the active support of Tran Quoc Buu, president of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT). Buu's enthusiasm for Hung began to cool last fall, however. Buu privately criticized Hung's role in the October-November cabinet crisis, in which Hung first joined with rebellious Southern ministers and then turned against them. At various times, Buu has deprecated Hung's competence,

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integrity, and dedication. A "pleasant fellow," Buu once called Hung, "but a zero." How zero would be Hung's chances of staying on as labor secretary if Buu's current view prevails with the GVN after election day.

So far Buu and the top CVT officials have been cool to the Thieu-Ky ticket. If this attitude changes, so may Buu's attitude toward Hung. On the other hand, one price of Buu's support for Thieu and Ky may well be Hung's ouster.

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